SCS – 050 Service Review Policy

TRIM Reference:	D25/178458	Due for Review:	October 2029
Responsible Officer:	General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness		

Purpose

Council delivers a broad range of services to its community which are designed to meet the community's diverse and changing needs and priorities.

Council recognises the importance of undertaking periodic reviews of the services it delivers to its community to ensure those services:

a. Are provided in an equitable manner and respond to the diverse needs of its community;

b. Are accessible to the members of its community for whom the services are intended; and

c. Provide good value to its community, taking into account the quality and cost of the services.

The Council must also ensure its ongoing financial viability when deciding which services it delivers to its community and how those services are delivered.

This policy supports Council's commitment to reviewing its services by setting the principles that the Council will consider when conducting service reviews and how service reviews will be prioritised to ensure that the services it delivers meet both the needs and priorities of the community and the obligations of Council.

Scope

This policy applies to Councillors and all employees and guides decision making in relation to the review of services delivered by Council to its community.

Policy

When undertaking and deciding on the outcome of a service review, the following principles will be considered:

1. **Strategic alignment:** Services respond to the priorities of the community set out in the Council Plan and the Community Vision;

2. **Current and future needs:** The range of services Council delivers addresses the current priorities of the community and balances the need to plan for their future requirements;

3. **Equity and access:** Equity and access to services is provided, recognising that the capacity to pay can impact both;

4. **Financial sustainability:** Reducing the level of rate subsidy for the cost of delivering services is important for the long-term financial sustainability of Council;

5. **Alternative providers:** Council may transition service delivery to another provider where there is a viable, equivalent alternative service provider for its community, including partnering with others to enhance or deliver services more efficiently or effectively;

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6. **Evidence-based decision making:** Evidence informs decisions about services so the facts are known before acting, including consideration of customer feedback about services;

7. **Community engagement:** Consultation about service reviews takes place with external and internal stakeholders impacted by the review;

8. **Transparency:** The service review process is open and transparent unless it is not appropriate to do so; and

9. **Compliance:** Services are compliant with relevant legislation and the legal obligations of funding providers.

Prioritisation of Service Reviews

Council's resources are finite, so identifying how to prioritise the investment of Council resources to fund service reviews is important.

Reviews will be prioritised by assessing services against all of the following criteria:

Category	Criteria
Strategic alignment	Service delivery aligns with the strategic direction of the Council Plan and Community Vision, taking into account that both reflect the priorities of the community
Risk	The risk exposure to Council or the community connected to the delivery of the service falls outside the risk appetite of Council
Community impact	Demand for the service has changed
	Customer and community complaints about the service
Cost	The cost of delivering the service is escalating beyond the Long-Term Financial Plan parameters
	The cost of delivering a service is or could be fully or partially funded through fees and charges (user-pays)
	There is a change in the cost to Council of delivering the service (including whether there is a change in funding available for the service from another source)
Nature of service	Council has discretion as to whether it delivers all or part of the service
	Service delivery is replicated in the open market, or about to be
Service standards	Benchmarking indicates that service levels are higher or lower than other comparative councils
	Service levels are more than is needed or less than is needed by the community
Technology	Service delivery is impacted by the use of technology
Operational	Effective service delivery is impacted by lack of operational resources

Roles and Responsibilities

To support the effective and efficient delivery of service reviews, the roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer are:

	Item/step	Council	CEO
Governance of Service Reviews	Council Plan	Adopt	Implement
	Budget (allocation for service reviews)	Adopt annually	Advise and implement
	Service Review Policy	Adopt	Implement
	Performance reporting (Quarterly budget/ Council Plan/ Annual report)	Receive and note	Develop and provide
	Prioritisation of Reviews	Set in the Policy	Apply criteria and decide on prioritisation and appropriate response
Implementation of Service Reviews	Service Review Program (4-year)	Councillor feedback on priority areas	Develop and approve
	Service review scope	Councillor feedback on scope of review	Develop and approve
	Service review recommendations & response	Approve within delegation	Approve within delegation Develop response and advise on implementation
	Business improvement initiatives		Develop, prioritise and approve

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Local Government Act 2020 Principles

Principles	Applicable to policy	If yes, provide details
Governance (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Governance principles: • priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations; • the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured; • the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured
Community Engagement (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Community Engagement principles: • a community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope; • participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation; • participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement; • participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement; • participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making
Public Transparency (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Public Transparency principles: • priority is to be Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act
Strategies and Plans (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Strategic Planning principles: • strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation
Financial Management (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Financial Management principles: • the financial viability of the Council; • the management of current and future liabilities of the Council.
Service Performance (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy considers the following Service Performance principles: • services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community; • services should be accessible to the members of the municipal

Principles	Applicable to policy	If yes, provide details
		community for whom the services are intended; • quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community

Definitions

Word	Definition
Community Vision	Community Vision adopted September 2021
Council Plan	Council Plan 2025-2029 (including the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
Service	A service delivered by Council to the community
Service Review	A process that considers the costs, quality and efficiency of a service that the Council provides and assesses whether the current mode of delivery is appropriate to meet the needs of the community and the Council's obligations.

Related Procedure

Service Review Procedure

References

Council Plan 2025-2029
Local Government Act (Vic) 2020
Surf Coast Shire Council Service Profile
Service Review Framework
Community Engagement Policy
Long Term Financial Plan

1. Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1		
2		
3		